
NEWS RELEASE

Judd Gregg

United States Senator for New Hampshire
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GREGG HELPS KICK-OFF MONADNOCK SCHOOL CHOICE PROGRAM

KEENE, N.H. -- U.S. Senator Judd Gregg (R-N.H.), the Ranking Member and incoming Chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, today called the public school choice program initiated by the Monadnock School District, “a great symbol of your commitment to improving the quality of life in New Hampshire” at an event in Keene today. Senator Gregg joined Keene Mayor Michael Blastos, Commissioner of the New Hampshire Department of Education Nick Donahue, members of the Keene and Monadnock school boards and other local officials to celebrate the beginning of the District’s public school choice program. In October, the U.S. Department of Education awarded the Monadnock Regional School District a \$835,974 grant for the program, which will involve members of surrounding communities, various local education agencies, the State Education Agency, and institutes of higher learning in the area. Senator Gregg spearheaded the effort in the Senate to provide grants of this nature in the No Child Left Behind education reform measure signed into law earlier this year, and contacted Secretary of Education Rod Paige in support of the grant. Monadnock was one of only thirteen initiatives nation-wide to secure federal funding for similar projects, and will continue to receive similar funding for a total of \$10.8 million over the five years of the grant.

Senator Gregg, also a member of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee that oversees funding for the Department of Education, stated, “Each partner represented here today should be congratulated for the outstanding commitment they have made to ensuring that every student who wants to learn has the opportunity to do so in the best possible environment. The Monadnock Region is the only rural area to receive this federal grant and is now in an ideal position to show how public school choice can work in a rural setting. This is an innovative program that will open doors to students in the Monadnock School District and I am pleased that these funds will be used to improve the quality of life here in New Hampshire.”

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The initiative will create additional small schools (like the Monadnock Community Connections School to be housed at Antioch College) with a focus on specialized areas of studies;

reduce the drop-out rate by offering educational programs that appeal to and challenge students who until now have failed in public schools; help the partners undertake an information campaign to publicize these new opportunities; hire additional teachers, if needed, and provide them further or specialized training and; offer more flexible educational opportunities to encourage parents to take a far greater role in their children's education. The program will also allow students to transfer among Monadnock, Keene, Hinsdale and Winchester high schools without having to pay tuition fees. For example, if a Winchester High School wants to take a class at Keene High school which is not available in Winchester, they will be able to do so.

Curt Cardine, Superintendent of Schools for the Monadnock School District, stated, "This grant will enable public schools in the southwestern tier of New Hampshire to offer public school choices to our students and their parents. At the same time we will devote our energies to improving all of the schools in our area so that each school becomes a school of choice. The grant provides the resources and time to allow us to develop more options for our students complimenting the public high school choice in the Monadnock Regional School District, MC 2 and our existing high schools."

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